

# Antibiotic Use in California Livestock: SB 27 Changes Starting January 1, 2018

by The CDFA Antimicrobial Use and Stewardship Team

**A**ntimicrobials are a crucial tool in your veterinary toolbox and coming January 1, 2018, there are several notable changes that will directly affect how you and your clients use them.

**What will change regarding use?** As of January 1, 2018, a medically important antimicrobial drug (MIAD) shall not be administered to livestock unless a licensed veterinarian having a valid **veterinarian-client-patient relationship (VCPR)** with the producer orders it through a prescription or veterinary feed directive (VFD). The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) defines MIADs in their Guidance for Industry #152\*. This mandates prescription for all MIAD use in the state.

The law also restricts MIAD use, as they cannot be used in "a regular pattern," allowing for treatment, control, and preventively for surgical or medical procedures. The veterinarian has discretion to address an elevated risk of contraction of a particular disease or infection through documented prophylaxis.

**What animals are included?** Specifically relating to this law, the definition of livestock is all animals and poultry, including aquatic and amphibian species that are raised, kept, or used for profit. In this instance, the law does not include bees or those species that are usually kept as pets, such as dogs, cats, and pet birds.

**What clients and animal owners will be affected?** Significant numbers of city and suburban dwellers raise a few laying hens, goats, pigs, or calves in the backyard. These animals often do not regularly see a veterinarian. Many owners get their antimicrobial drugs from feed stores, friends with animals, or even the internet. You can find such clients all over the state, and you may already be treating their dogs or cats. Expect that if you are a companion animal veterinarian, hobbyists and backyard producers could ask for help this January.

**What about the commercial livestock producers in California?** Many farmers and ranchers who already use veterinarians may supplement with over-the-



counter MIADs as well, which will require documented necessity and prescriptions in the upcoming year.

**Hasn't this already been covered with VFDs?** As federal regulations took effect January 2017, they cover MIADs in feed and water. The remaining targets of this law are the over-the-counter MIADs that had no prescription requirement until now. The California law approaching implementation this January brings all routes of administration of a MIAD to be under prescription or VFD.

**Who is overseeing this transition?** The California Department of Food and Agriculture's Antimicrobial Use and Stewardship (AUS) program was developed to not only assist in developing "use regulations," but to also develop stewardship guidelines and a voluntary monitoring system. These will provide veterinarians and their clients a better understanding of use, husbandry practices, and antimicrobial resistance in California. We have periodic opportunities for you to connect with us, ask questions, and make your voice heard regarding our stewardship and monitoring programs. These opportunities may include online surveys, meetings, and local outreach projects.

Look for updates regarding AUS at [cdfa.ca.gov/ahfss/AS/](http://cdfa.ca.gov/ahfss/AS/). ■

\*Links to the laws and guidance can be found on the CDFA website.